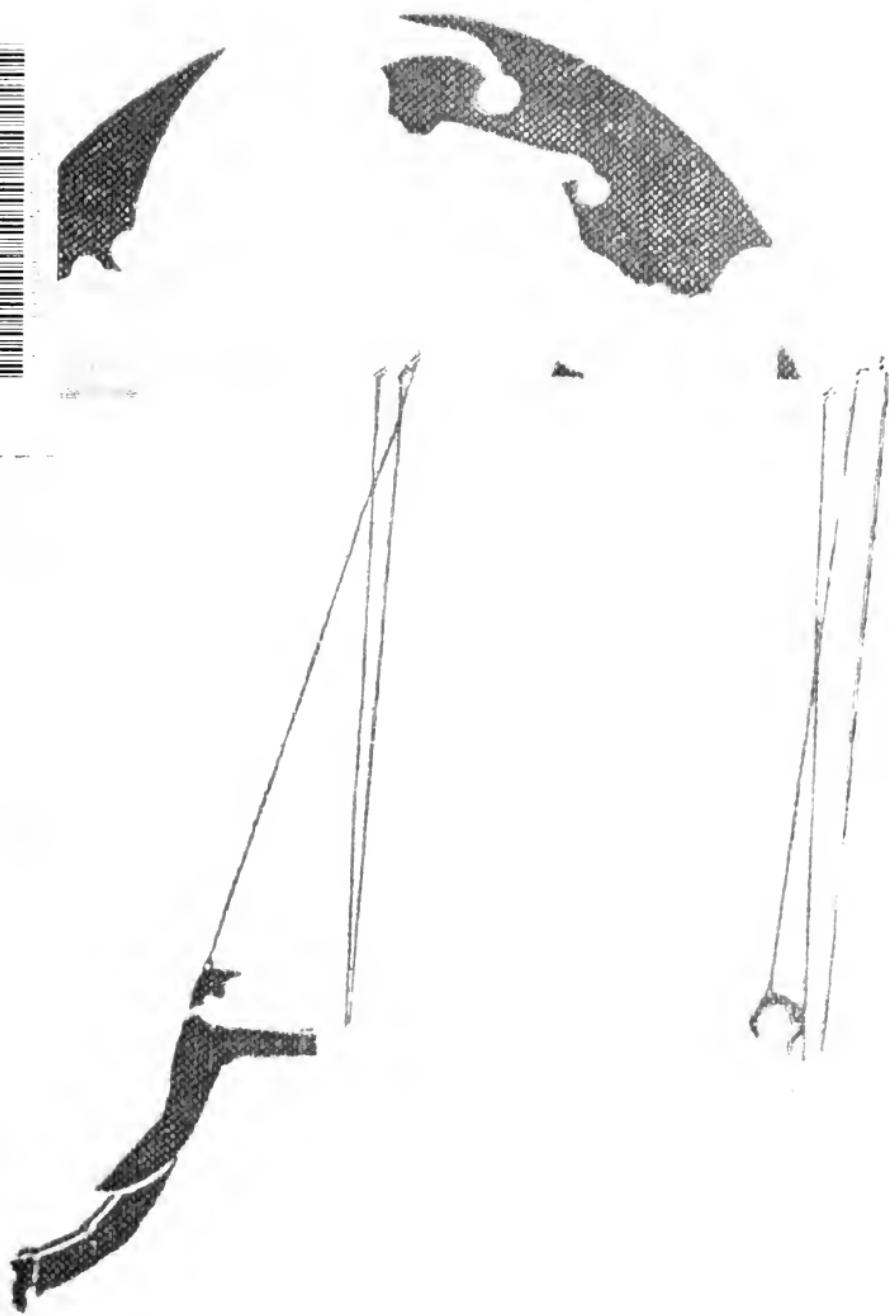


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Antrim, M. T.

AUTHOR

Jester Life and his
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WILLIAM
H. MORSE

JESTER LIFE *and* HIS MARIONETTES

By MINNA THOMAS ANTRIM



80773
Am 91
aec.

*"All the world's
a stage and all the
men and women
merely players."*

— AS YOU LIKE IT

PHILADELPHIA
HENRY ALTEMUS COMPANY

6270

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HOWARD E. ALTEMUS
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JESTER LIFE *and*
HIS MARIONETTES



JESTER LIFE *and* HIS MARIONETTES

The Fool and Talent

“May the Good Lord deliver me from the follies of the Wise!” exclaimed the Fool, regarding his peaked cap and bells with a look of detestation.

“If schools and travel verily educate, and if learning bringeth Wisdom, then, how cometh it, that I, a poor old Fool, who hath neither book

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wisdom, nor hath seen strange lands, am wiser than they all? Yet I use my little hard-got learning for profit, and often set the wisest of them thinking."

The Jester ceased his soliloquy. A woman glided into the court-yard, which was that of King Mammon, to whom the Fool was Court Jester.

"Come," she whispered, "I have sore need of thy help."

Bowing courteously, the Fool followed her a little aside.

"Thou art no Fool," said she, "save in the rôle thou playest before the Mammonites. Thou art rather a Philosopher, to whom the ways of

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gods and men are less difficult than to the real Fools, who call themselves Wiseacres.

“Tell me, an thou wilt, how to kill the never-absent Thing that hampers me at every step.”

“Its name?” asked the Fool, anxiously.

“Envy,” the woman whispered. “Its horrible breath sickens me. I cannot bear it longer. Thou hast wit; also, thou art wise. Help me!”

The fool leaned his chin thoughtfully upon his lean hand, for a long while. So long mused he, that the woman tapped his shoulder impatiently.

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“First of all,” said he, sharply, “tell me thy name.”

“Talent.”

“Alack then, I fear I cannot help thee. For centuries, between thy forebears and Envy, there has been a deathless feud, which to this day burns as hotly as in the beginning.”

“But,” said the woman, “is there to be no end?”

“None, unless—”

“Unless what?”

Hesitatingly the Fool opened, then closed, his lips.

“Thou shouldst forswear thy birthright,” he said, “and—”

“And what?” panted Talent feverishly.

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“Assume the black weeds of Failure,” he gravely answered.

Despairingly Talent wrung her hands.

“Even then,” continued the Fool, “thou canst not kill Envy. Thou canst but throw her off thy track—for so long as one talent survives, Envy will follow.”

For a second, Talent looked piteously into the kind face of the wise old Fool. Then, murmuring a few words of thanks, glided away as noiselessly as she had come.

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The Debtor

The Fool lay dying.
“Whither goest thou?”
asked a fellow-Fool.

“To the Devil,” said the
Fool. “Him alone have I
to pay.”

So died an honest Fool. *



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Love's Itinerary

“Let me in,” clamored Love, knocking at the door of a silly girl’s heart.

Open flew the door.

“Welcome, thrice welcome!” cried the maiden.

Whereupon, off flew Love.

“Let me in,” Love cried, knocking at the door of a selfish woman’s heart.

“Prove first that thou art Love,” she answered.

Love pointed to his blind eyes.

Convinced, she drew him in, and immediately bolted the door.

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Being imprisoned, Love remained until his ally, Opportunity, arrived, when away he sped.

“Let me in,” pleaded Love, knocking at the door of a clever woman’s heart.

She laughed and sent him away.

Again he knocked. Again she refused him admittance.

Many times he strove to enter, before she opened the door to him.

“This door will always be open,” she said, pleasantly.

Hearing this, Love stayed.

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A Costly Game

Two mischievous little maidens, seeing Eros asleep in his Garden, became enamored of the fair face of the Trickster.

“How beautiful he is!” whispered one.

“Yes, and how soundly he is sleeping! We could play a joke on him,” laughed the other.

“How?”

“By stealing his darts.”

“What fun! Let’s try!” said the other.

Whereupon they did try, and succeeded. Love was not asleep, however, but feigning.

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Alack, in their mad haste to get the better of the sleeping god, they went at too swift a pace, and—fell.

Each fair breast was cruelly torn by a dart.

Meanwhile, Eros, hearing their groans, smiled. He arose and walked toward where they lay.

“Pity me,” moaned the eldest maiden, “take out this cruel dart, dear Eros.”

“Yes,” wailed the other, “we did not know; we were only playing; pity us, Eros.”

But Eros made no motion to remove the cause of their suffering. Perhaps he could

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not, for he is blind. Sad to say, he did not try.

“This will teach you,” he said icily, “that it is always dangerous for pretty maidens to play with Love’s weapons.”

And deaf to their piteous entreaties, he went his way.

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Beyond Help

“What aileth me?” asked the Woman wearily.

“*Thou hast nothing left to wish for. For thy complaint we have no physic,*” answered the Leech.

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Pity and Sympathy

“Do not despair,” implored Sympathy. “Your mission on earth is a holy one.”

Pity’s eyes filled with tears. “You are good to try to comfort me, for my heart is always sad. Wherever I go, my coming is resented. When I would aid those in distress, my enemy, Pride, runs fast before me, and so maligns my motives that although I am admitted, neither love nor gratitude do I find.”

Sympathy was silent; too well she knew that Pity spoke the truth.

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Her Toilet

“Never inquire too closely into the toilet of Beauty,” sneered the Old Cynic.

“Beauty’s toilet is made at the Well of Truth,” retorted the Young Gallant.

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Wife-Seeking

“Whither goest thou?”
asked Experience, curiously.

“To find an Interesting
Woman,” said Egotism.

“And when found?”

“I shall wed her.”

Experience smiled, as she
saw the Wife-Seeker hurrying
into the house of Simplicity.

Out he came, frowning.

“Shallow-pate! talked of
nothing save bread and butter.”

Next he visited Vanity, who
spoke only of her conquests.

“A female Narcissus, stark
mad at her own charms,” he
commented, as he walked
away in disgust.

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Determined to find a Wife, he visited the daughter of Mammon. A short time sufficed to convince him that money alone appealed to her.

Finally, he thought of a shy little Woman whom he had once met. He went swiftly to her neat abode. She was in. After a long visit, he came out, radiant, and ran to the place where dwelt Experience.

“Wish me luck; I have found a Wife after my own heart, a treasure!”

“A really Interesting Woman?” queried Experience.

“Aye, a Woman of vast dis-

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crimination, who says little, but—”

“Listens splendidly?” drily suggested Experience.

“Aye,” answered Egotism, “and who understands me.”

“Oh, I know her well, and all her family,” interrupted Experience. “Is not her name Nonentity?”

Egotism nodded delightedly. “We shall be married to-morrow.”

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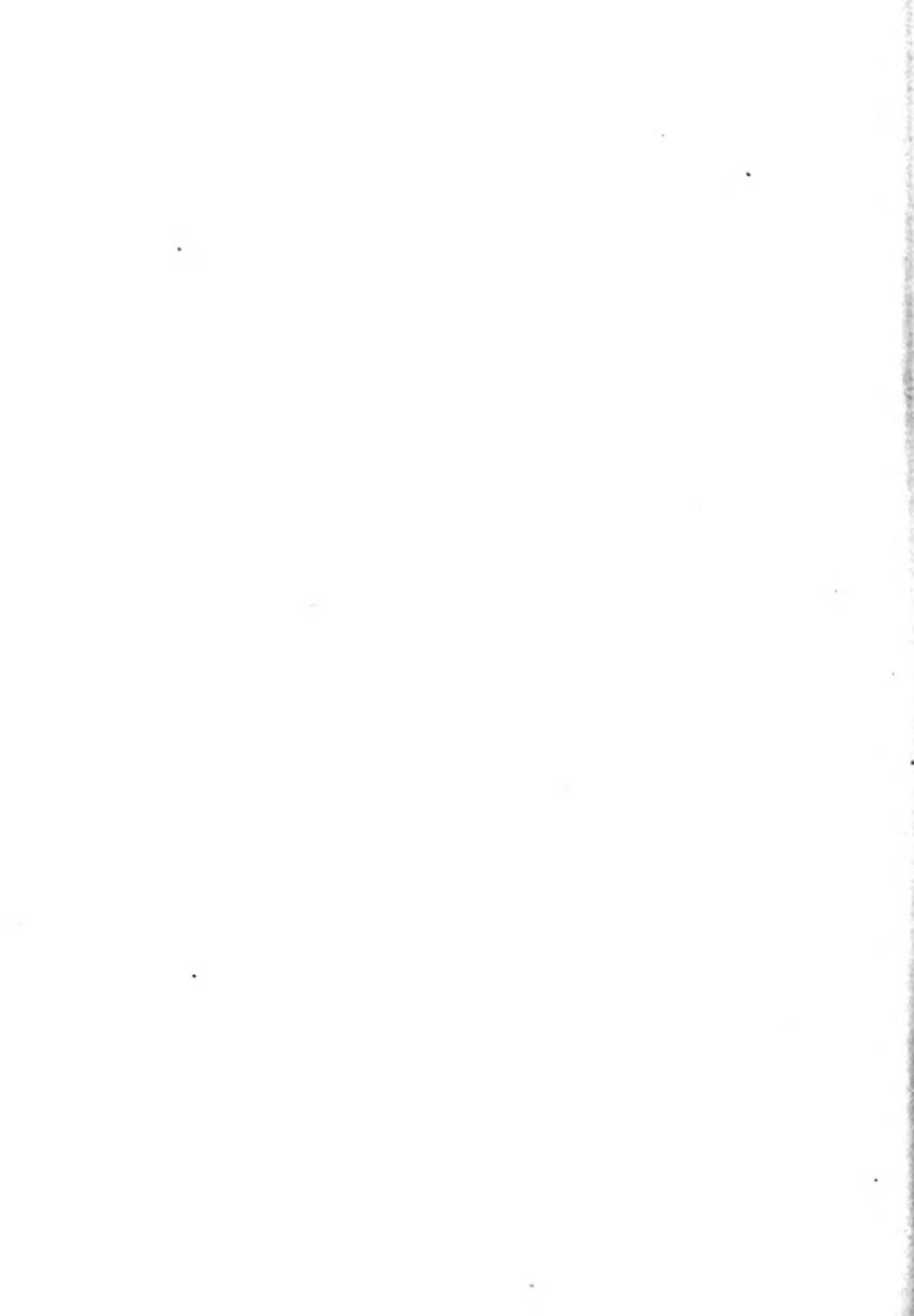
The Liar

“Whither, Mr. Liar, goest thou now?” laughed Experience, for the Liar was a winsome knave.

“To the House of Duty,” chuckled the Liar, tongue in cheek.

“O Duty, how many abuses are committed in thy name!” exclaimed Experience, as she watched the Liar enter the gaily illuminated House of Folly.





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A Perfect Disguise

Having fully recovered from an illness, Satan threw from him, contemptuously, his saintly habit.

“What rot!” said he. “No longer a saint I’ll be!”

“Did your majesty call?” asked an imp, a-tremble.

“Yes; I am going out within the hour. Get me my best disguise. Make haste!”

In a moment the imp returned with the costume.

“Very good,” chuckled Satan; “a perfect disguise!”

A moment later he had donned a gentleman’s evening clothes.

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The Masquerader

“Whose cloak art thou
wearing?” asked Curiosity.

“Oh, Love’s, as usual,”
sneered Desire.

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*The Woman and
The Oracle*

A woman, pale and spiritless, knelt before the Oracle.

“Give me, O Oracle, a talisman whereby to hold my lord.”

For a long while the Wise One spake not, then :

“Men are not wild beasts who answer to a rein,” he said.

“My beauty is gone,” wailed the suppliant, unabashed at the reproof; “my charms are faded.”

“Replace them,” said the Oracle.

“Alas, I know not how,” the woman answered.

Thereupon, for a long while,

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the Oracle counseled the unhappy wife, who ran home joyously.

That night, when her lord returned, and, as usual, related the day's doings, happening to look up, he saw a beautiful radiance in his wife's eyes. Delightedly he recognized it. It was Interest, which stimulated him.

Then he began to speak of amusing things; the erstwhile down-drawn lips curved with appreciative humor, which flattered him.

He then spoke, admiringly, of something she wore. Her blushes assured him of his

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sovereignty, which pleased him.

And when he proposed a week's itinerary, and she did not insist upon a family exodus, she won him.

Thus to the letter, followed the woman the advice of the Oracle, and she was happy.

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The Moth

“Is she pretty?” asked He.

“*At night,*” said the Cynic.

“Is she wise?”

“*In the morning,*” laughed
the Cynic.

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Too Much

“Ha! Ha! Ha!” roared Credulity.

“Thou art pleased to be merry,” Curiosity said, smiling in sympathy.

“What utter, utter asses these mortals be!”

“Wherefore?”

“Herefore. I have just promised a divorced man and a divorced woman, if they will but marry each other, a future of perfect happiness.”

“Well, such a thing might be.”

“But,” explained Credulity, “each has been twice divorced from the other.”

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Broken Vows

“Look herein!” commanded Memory.

The Woman gazed attentively into the mirror, and presently across its surface came all the vows that she had broken, and each was marked with blood.

Whereupon, she fell weeping, but Memory had for her neither pity nor balm.

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Affinity

Affinity's face went ashen.

"Nay good Honesty," he sniveled, "neither worldly goods nor silver have I, therefore I cannot wed!"

"But right lustily canst thou rob a woman of her peace of mind, and spotless fame!" thundered Honesty.

As he spoke, it came to pass that Affinity began to suffer with pain, such as had afflicted him ne'er before. With many groans, he pleaded for surcease.

Finally, Honesty, being fatigued, desisted.

"Go, hound, back to thy

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kennel," he panted; "never let me catch thee defiling the ear of Innocence with thy Satan-taught sophistries."

Whereat Affinity limped away muttering strange anathemas.

After he had rested, and when all his bruises were healed, straightway he began to plan subtler traps for the feet of brotherless women.

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Eden

With Kingly mien he strode
along the path that led to—her.

Scattering the fig-leaves
right and left, she ran with
eager arms outheld, to meet
the coming Man.

“Adam!”

“My Eve!”

Clasping her tenderly against
his heart, she answered his
caresses, murmuring, “You do
believe, don’t you, Dear Heart,
that you are the only Man I
ever loved?”

And, with trustful glance, he
told her he believed.

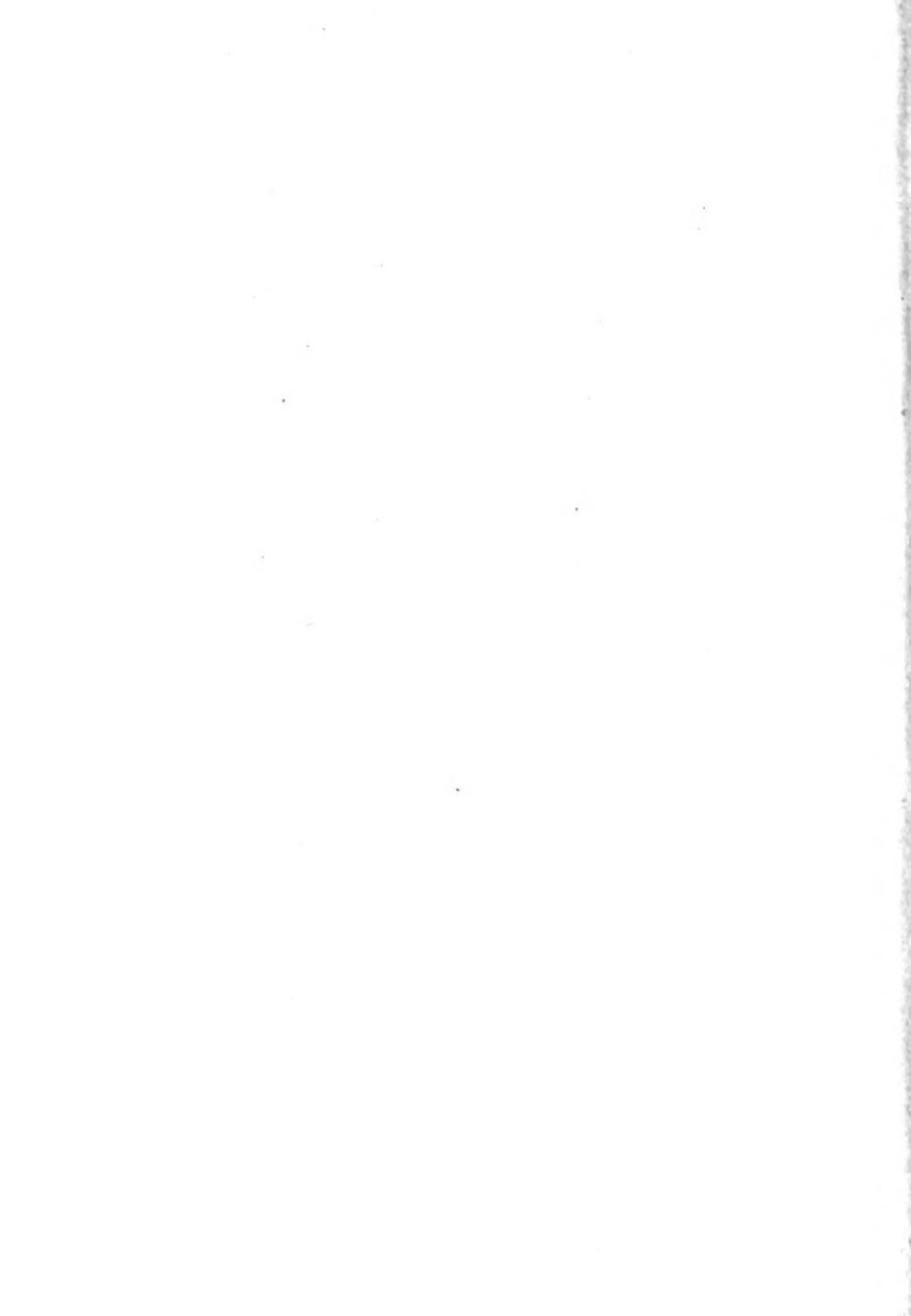
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Dead

“I am without sin,” declared the religious Egoist.

“Then we gaze upon the dead!” exclaimed Experience. “No sinless man could breathe this air, and live.”





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The Graftor

Haughtily, he held his top-hatted head above the jostling crowd. Swiftly, and as the crow flies, he bent his way toward the Castle of Plenty.

Having arrived, he thrust the servants masterfully aside, and strode into the presence of the Good-Natured Goddess of Plenty, who greeted him graciously.

“Thou art early to-day,” said Plenty.

“The poor may not loiter,” said the Graftor.

“Thou art looking robust.”

“Were I possessed of enough gold, I might be a well man.”

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“Thy raiment honors thy taste,” continued Plenty affably.

“The pattern is fairly good, but a better tailor I know of, who for a trifle more money—which I have not—would clothe me properly.”

“I hear thou wilt wed a rich wife,” said Plenty presently.

“Aye, when I can raise money for wedding favors,” answered the Graftor, mournfully.

Whereupon, being an indulgent Goddess, Plenty arose and quickly opened one of her great cornucopias.

“Here is money,” she said,

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handing it to her guest. "It is not a fortune, but it will more than suffice thee for doctor, tailor and wedding favors. Take it, and may happiness attend its spending!"

As he left the Castle, the Grafters eyes glittered angrily. "Miser! Miser!" he hissed. "Twice this sum she might have given me and never felt it."

Meanwhile, kind-hearted Plenty rejoiced that she had given the Grafters abundantly for all his needs.

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Desire

“She is young and fair; she must be mine. What is thy price?” demanded *Desire*.

“Her Soul,” said *Satan*.

“If I live, it is thine,” chuckled *Desire*, turning away.

Contemptuously *Satan* looked after the dotard. Then, clapping his hands, he summoned his body servant, *Opportunity*.

“That *Knave*; his life within the hour! We need some seasoned fuel.”

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The Egoist

“Pardon, Master, I see no dust,” he humbly said.

Taking the trembling lackey by the ear, the Egoist led him to the window in full sun glare; pointed sharply to a single speck of dust no bigger than a pin’s head; meanwhile he stormed.

“What! What if the world had seen that, had seen me, *me*, go into the street thus begrimed with dirt!”

Carefully the servant removed the tiny speck, after which the Egoist left the room, dustless, and high-headed as usual.

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A Celebrity

“What is a Celebrity?”
asked Ignorance.

“Usually an Ass in a Lion’s
skin,” answered Experience,
drily.

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A Runaway

“What are you tugging at?” asked Faith, anxiously.

“My marital rein,” said Selfishness.

“You had best be careful,” Faith whispered to Selfishness, whose hands were purple with trying to break the overstrained rein.

Selfishness answered not a word, but kept on tugging.

Suddenly, snap went the rein, and simultaneously away ran the badgered husband of Selfishness. So great was his relief, that he never stopped until a vast ocean lay between him and his erstwhile keeper.

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Selfishness, who really loved her lord, fell ill of grief and died.

Whereupon, after a decorous year, the runaway returned and married a little wife at whom the Cynics laugh. Her name is Faith.

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In at Last!

The wife of Midas knocked at the door of Caste. She was not admitted.

She tapped at the door of Letters. Sneering, they sent her away.

She tried at the house of Cleverness. No one responded.

She knocked at Sorrow's door. She was unwelcome.

She crossed the threshold of God's house. She was stared out of countenance.

Finally, she reached the door of Heaven. There, her countless good works, performed in secret, were remembered, and the gates swung open.

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Bad Luck

“Fool! Fool! whom cursest thou now?” frowned Sobriety.

“That knavish Luck,” yelled the Fool, beginning anew.

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Love and Infatuation

Love is composed of Admiration, Consideration, and Moderation. Infatuation is made up of Flame, Folly and Fickleness. Love is deathless. Infatuation short-lived. Love sees faults as well as charms in the beloved. Infatuation is blind. Love is content to be near the dear one when it is best. Infatuation will break down barriers, human and divine, to be ever with its object. Love forgives much because it is sane. Infatuation forgives nothing; it has no sanity. Love will sacrifice self in order to make the beloved happy. Infatuation

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will sacrifice nothing if self must be denied. Love grows steadily and has no times of chill and moodiness. Infatuation hates even while it fiercely desires. Love's liveries are of purest white. It protects its object. Infatuation masquerades as Love, but ne'er protects. Love respects the law. Infatuation knows no law. Love is Heaven. Infatuation is—Hell.

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Sweet Rivalry

Flattery offered her his arm and led her to a cooler seat.

“Look, just look, at that ridiculous Folly!” she exclaimed. “See how eagerly she is swallowing the preposterous nonsense these fools are speaking!”

“How different from yourself, of whom all they are saying, might, nay, would be, more than true,” whispered Flattery.

“How sweet it is to be understood,” murmured Vanity, regarding Flattery with her tenderest smile.

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Kisses Two

“Ah,” cooed Falsity, “never
lived truer friend to thee than I.”

“Nor I, Dear Heart, to thee.”

Whereupon, they fondly
kissed.

Without, a Cock crew—
thrice.





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A Dream in Metaphor

Whirling, whirling, downward, through densest darkness into purple shadows, then circling with incredible swiftness through incredible distances, on, on, through silver hazes, to flickering golden light. Then a voice, close to my ear, whispered: "We are at our journey's end. You have reached that land for which you set out."

I tried to see, but my eyes were strangely dim.

"Tell me," I said, "exactly what it is like. I cannot see."

"Oh," said the Voice, "it is horrible! so dull, so dead, that

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even the very flowers here are odorless."

"Who rules this Land?"

"A stern Goddess, called Duty, who has but small pity for women who are not strong."

"What Land lies beyond?" I asked.

I fancied I could hear his heart beating. Accompanying the thrilling voice, came the odor of sandal wood, blended with strange Oriental scents, emanating from the flowing mantle he wore. Although I saw it not, I touched its folds and knew he was of the East.

"What Land lies beyond?"

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he echoed, a rapturous little sigh betraying emotion.

“Beyond this barren Land,” (again the sigh) “lies the Garden of Eros, the Kingdom of Love,” he breathed, softly.

“Tell me of that Garden,” I said, speaking gently, loath to miss one syllable.

Dropping the commonplace form of speech, he half intoned his rhapsody.

Said he, “In the Garden of Eros, all is gay, for Love is King. Laughter and Joy (his favorites) fill the hours with gladness. Always there is song and dancing. In the Garden, the flowers bloom timorously.

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E'en chaste lilies shake their golden bells when Eros passes by."

"Oh, come, come!" he pleaded. "Thou canst not remain here! Thou art so young, so fair to look upon. Come, let us not delay! Love, I know, will welcome thee."

I shook my head. "Love has hurt me sorely. See!" I bared my wounded heart. The agony of the unhealed wound doubled at the mention of that Name.

"Nay, Love is blind; he knows not where his arrows strike. Come with me to the Garden of Eros, where I will

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lull thy sharp pain with juice
of poppies, and if it be too
deep, I will gather a lotus
flower and balm thy heart.
Thou art weak. See, I have
brought Life's Golden Chalice.
It is filled with the wine of
delight, which, drained, brings
joy or forgetfulness. Drink!"

I pushed the cup from me.
I distrusted still.

"O Fool! Fool! Dost thou
not know what a short span
lies betwixt Here and Here-
after? Drink quickly, that
thou mayest know the secrets
of Life, and—"

Interrupting the music of
his voice, I drank.

JESTER LIFE AND
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“Tell me your name,” I said.

“Persuasion,” he answered, “and thine?”

“Is Regret.”

“Re-christen thyself. Drink to Life,” he whispered. “There! Now to Love and all its rhapsodies.”

I drained the Chalice.

“So, let the future be enwrapped in sable pall. It is not for us to know what Time shall do. Come, let us hasten whither Eros is King.”

Feeling strangely elated, I arose, and together we walked hand in hand toward Love’s Kingdom.

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“To live and love,” he murmured, “to drain Life’s Golden Chalice to the dregs. What else is there to do?”

“But the end?” I asked.

“If we shall have LIVED, what matters then the end?”

“And afterward—?”

“And afterward—we shall *sleep*. We shall lie down and rest as children do, content, at peace, alone.”

“Alone!” I shuddered.

“And in the Summer time,” the deep, beautiful voice went on comfortingly, “who knows? Mayhap Eros himself may come and stand beside thy flower-sown bed, and say ten-

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derly, as of a sleeping child: 'She sleeps the faster who in life hath wept.'"

As he ceased speaking, unseen arms seemed to lift me gently and lay me upon a resting place of wonderful softness, about which floated the delicious odor of freshly gathered roses. Again I floated away, whirling, whirling, downward through densest darkness, into purple shadows, then circling with incredible swiftness, through incredible distances, on, on, through silver hazes, to flickering golden light and—consciousness.

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A Fascinating Habit

“So you admire this Habit, little one?” gently queried the elder woman.

Flushing slightly, Inexperience whispered diffidently, “Oh, so much! Might I—would you tell me exactly what it is called, so that when I go out into the World, and would wear it, I may make no error?”

The other one moved a little closer to the questioner, and said softly—

“It is the Habit called Diplomacy, dear child.”

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Her Secret

“How curious! Look,” said the Maiden, “at that smartly-clad woman digging in the mire.”

The Devil, who was disguised as a gentleman, half closed his snaky eyes.

“Methinks the Lady has a little Indiscretion to hide.”

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Her Choice

Said Destiny, to a beautiful woman, "This day being the twentieth anniversary of our first meeting, thou mayest ask of me one thing—choose what thou wilt—and I will give it thee."

"Must I decide to-day?"

"Thou mayest delay a year. One year hence, at this very hour, I revoke my promise."

For months, the agitated woman tried to decide what thing in all the world she most earnestly desired.

Woman-like, her beauty she thought of first; but—would not great wealth be better?

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Almost she had persuaded herself to choose wealth, when she met a fascinating man.

Love, she concluded, would bring her happiness.

“Love has never made any woman quite happy,” Experience warned her. So, she cast Love into the background, afraid to trust him. The allurements of Social Power thrilled her, and yet—up trooped a thousand sweeter things, as rivals. Through doubt, she grew wan, and sleepless.

The months rolled on, until the year was gone.

The hour of revocation drew

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rapidly near. With head and heart a-throb, she waited Destiny's return.

Prostrate, at the very hour she lay, her wish unchosen.

“It lacks five minutes of the hour,” she was reminded. Wildly she watched the moments tick away.

“Give me a contented mind!” she cried distractedly.

Scarcely were the words uttered, when a great sense of relief came over her, a contentment never before experienced.

“A peace that passeth all understanding,” she thankfully assured Destiny, who, smiling, turned away.

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Logic's Decision

“Who has lived best?”
wondered the Thinker.

“He who has made the greatest number merry,” answered Logic, who knew that every man’s soul is saved by his own efforts.





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Woman's Friendship

“Thou art her friend, and mine. Advise me,” pleaded the Eligible.

“Well,” mused Falsity, “as I am her friend, I find it hard to say what I would.”

“What meanest thou, woman?”

“I mean—nothing.”

“But thou hast said—”

“I have said nothing,” smiled Falsity, through her curling lashes.

Off stalked the Eligible, shaking the dust vigorously from his feet.

“O, Friendship, how vilely thou art misused!” said he.

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Pedigree

“Who begat thee?” asked Pedigree.

“A good man,” answered Honesty. “Would that thou, Friend Pedigree, hadst been so sired!”

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Three Women and Bohemia

Three women knocked timidly at the Gate of Bohemia. Two of them were beautiful. One was named Clever.

The Gatekeeper, whose name was Censor, quickly appeared.

“Thy passports!” he said coldly.

The two beauties unveiled their faces.

“Pass in,” said Censor quickly.

Clever showed him the laurel she had won.

“Enter,” said he, more kindly. Then closed he the Gate.

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Time whirled for a year,
and both Laughter and Tears
reigned in Bohemia.

The same three, walking
abreast, wished to make their
exit from Bohemia.

The Gatekeeper appeared
as before.

Into their faces he looked
searchingly, for no one leaves,
even as no one enters, that do-
main, unless he knows whence
came they or whither they
would go.

“Thy face I know,” he
said to the first woman, “and
yet I place thee not. Thy
name?”

“My name is Impulse,”

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said she, hanging her head in very shame.

“And thou hast come to grief?” he murmured pityingly.

“Aye,” moaned Impulse, “I have come to bitter grief.” Silently she passed out, and walked downward towards the Valley of Pain.

The next came forward. “Thy face also I know, yet name thee, I cannot,” he said.

The white face, beautiful no longer, looked wistfully into his.

“My name is Vanity.”

“Poor child! And Flattery has been thy ruin?”

The woman shook her head dejectedly.

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“Did no one warn thee of this oily Knave?” asked Censor.

“Experience did. Not once, but many times. Also, ‘Keep far from Bohemia,’ she said; ‘tis not safe for one like thee.’”

Sadly, she too passed out, and, like the first, went down toward the Valley of Pain.

Then turned the old Gate-keeper to the last of the three who wished to leave.

“Thee well I know, indeed” he said. “And how,” he asked “has Bohemia treated thee?”

“Royally,” cried the woman. “Always have men acted toward me as real men should. Burdens too heavy for women’s

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strength, have they helped me bear right manfully."

"Hast thou met Laughter?"

"Aye, and her foster sister, Tears; and both I liked full well. Tears, though sad, oft comforted, and Laughter made tedious work seem play."

"And Flattery?"

"Upon his smirking face I shut my door," laughed Cleverness.

"And Bohemia's famous god?"

"None of his vintages has touched my lips. I have kept brain-clear."

"And Love?" whispered Censor.

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The woman blushed right rosily.

“For Love’s dear sake I get me hence,” she said.

As she spoke, a majestic form emerged from a sheltered place near the Gate. It was the Great Teacher, Experience.

“Because thou hast heeded my warnings, my Daughter, both Fame and Love have come to thee, even as I said. Thou art well called—‘*Cleverness.*’”

Whereupon the Gatekeeper opened, and, with eyes alight, the woman regretfully passed out.

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Intuition

Shuddering and white-faced, Intuition made her way back from the very edge of the frightful precipice of Desire; then, running like a white hare, soon passed through the Gate of Safety.

At this same hour, the Devil, while gnashing his teeth, and furiously lashing his tail against the swaying floor of Hades, cursed Intuition with Satanic eloquence.

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The Family Tree

“It’s too bad!” exclaimed Mother Earth. “You’re too old to be so disturbed. Why don’t they let you rest?”

“Well,” quavered the Family Tree, “they use my poor old roots as a step-ladder. Gadzooks! my branches feel quite dead.”

Sympathetically, Mother Earth laid a snowy coverlet over the quivering old roots.

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Poor Jove

“Juno,” said Jove, “I am going out to take the air; I need exercise.”

“Wait,” said his queen, with a strangely knowing smile, “I also need the air. I will go with you.”

“But,” objected Jove, “we should not both be gone. What if some of our children, or other immortals, should come? One of us should be here to receive them.”

“Very true, dear,” said Juno; “you may remain at home.”

Which Jove did.

This explains why it thun-

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dered so furiously that night, and also why a certain favorite of the Thunderer waited in the groves of Olympus so many hours in vain.

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Secrets

Long and earnestly two women spake together. One was very young; the other, older by threescore years. One spoke at length, and with authority. The other listened, her eyes cast down, her blushing cheek averted. She was hearing for the first time some of the wickedness of this most wicked world. Her pure soul rose in revolt. She who had spoken of Life's wantonness, was the granddaughter of the woman who blushed.

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Punishment

“O God, save, save me from this Monstrous Age!” shrieked Vanity.

But, for her sins, she was fated each day thenceforth, to see his threatening heralds.

Finally, bringing his brimming cup of aloes, Age arrived. And the pain of death was, compared with the pangs she bore at this time, as slumber, after a day in torture spent.



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Prospects

“Rest easy,” whispered Prospects. “There is no need for you to exert yourself. I will be your friend from now on. What do you most desire?”

“I wish a beautiful wife, a fine mansion, a box at the Opera, everything a gentleman should have,” said the Youth, greedily.

Prospects secured them for him.

“Here I leave you,” he said, upon the culmination of the Youth’s good fortune. And he went forthwith.

A year afterwards, another

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knocked peremptorily at the Youth's door.

“Who are you?” asked he.

“Adversity is my name.”

“What do you want?”

“All that you have,” said Adversity, sourly.

Heedless of protest, the newcomer took away all, save his debtor's wife.

“Thee, at least, I have still,” said Youth, through tears.

“I am going back to my father,” she said, coldly. “I was deceived. I have no vocation for Privation.”

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Scandal's Pride

“Tell me, what hast thou done this month?” asked Gossip.

“Well, I’ve parted scores of friends, damaged a few thousand reputations, and dragged several families into the divorce court,” Scandal made answer. “And thou?”

“Mortally wounded Faith,” said Gossip, lifting her head proudly.

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Merely Rumor

Suddenly there arose a sound like sportive wind in the tree-tops, accompanied by woman's shrillings.

Hastily to his ærie ran Curiosity. Quickly he returned to his seat 'neath a fig tree. "Nothing but the flappings of Rumor, and her Scarecrow daughters," he mused disgustedly.

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The Dead Flower

Slowly Queen Caprice lifted the snowy curtain of her sleep-bound eyes. Then, serpent-like, uncoiled her lithe body, and rose triumphant.

The face of her little hand-maiden went white with dread. Whether her sweet mistress would have her crowned, or beheaded within the hour, she knew not. One never could know.

“My minions; call them hither!” commanded Caprice sharply.

“We are here, O Queen,” panted her bond-servants.

“These violets; take them

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away, their scent is odious!
Who brings me violets more,
shall lose his head."

"As many a vassal hath by
thy command," thought Ser-
vice, the little maiden.

"Perchance our gracious
Queen will choose a finer
flower?" said the Lord High
Gardener, bowing humbly.

"That forsooth will she, a
rare one! Go thou, and all
thy helpers, and see if Knight-
hood is in flower!"

Stepping backward, one by
one, her minions faded from
view.

An hour passed. The brow
of Queen Caprice began to

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darken, and in her steel-blue eyes, strange lightnings flashed.

But ere the storm burst forth, the Lord High Gardener and his helpers appeared.

“Well?” Clear-cut, the imperious voice rang out.
“Speak, sirrah!”

Then, he who wore the Gardener’s livery, but who was in sooth another, spake. Firmly into her eyes he looked.

“Thou art too late, O Queen. Knighthood was in flower, but the flower is withered, and—”

“The root?” gasped Caprice.

“The root is dead,” gravely answered the supposed Gar-

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dener, whose dreaded name was Discipline.

Hearing which, Queen Caprice, to whom to wish, and not obtain, was agony, motioned her attendants away, even exiling little Service; then for one whole hour, ceaselessly she wept, and wept, and wept.

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After the Fall

Slowly the Serpent uncoiled himself and gazed after the retreating forms of Adam and Eve.

“ Well ! ” hissed he. “ To think a little taste like that could upset Creation ! What an infernal cad that Adam is ! ”

Whereupon, having spat forth his disgust, he recoiled himself and nestled as before, close up against the Tree of Knowledge.

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The Visitor

Life being very ill, saw a stranger upon his threshold.

“Go!” he commanded.

“After you,” the visitor replied.

Thereupon, gliding to the bed, he laid his hand upon Life, and the two passed out, Life going first.





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Her Passports

“Do you think you will be received by Society?” sneered the Cynic. “Never! Your grandfather shaved notes!”

“No matter,” said she, serenely, “I shall arrive.”

“But you will be snubbed.”

“Never! I’ll stake my millions that I shall be welcomed,” said the woman.

“Tell me,” said the Cynic, convinced by her manner, “your winning card.”

“I have an inexhaustible supply of new amusements,” she gleefully whispered.

Hearing this, the Cynic knew that she was very clever.

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“ You are right,” said he,
bowing deferentially over her
extended hand; “you are
bound to succeed.”

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How They Want It

“Women are never satisfied,” complained the Unwise Man.

“Give them the Earth and they cry for the Moon; give them the Moon and they weep for another world. Men are so different; they want but little here below.”

“But want that little — strong,” answered the Wise Woman, mockingly.

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The Seeker

“Where does Happiness hide?” asked the Seeker angrily, for he was not young and had traveled far.

“Behind the shoulders of the Sphinx,” smiled Wisdom.

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The Pace

“Go thou by thyself, Hurry,” said Progress; “I cannot run; besides, I must look carefully, lest I lose my way.”

Whereupon, glad to be rid of his slow companion, Hurry rushed for the goal like a whirlwind.

Progress, nothing daunted, plodded steadily on.

Hurry, while looking backward at limping Progress, laughed gleefully; so gleeful was he, that he fell into a ditch, and broke both his legs, and lay howling.

While Progress, looking only whither he was going,

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arrived at the goal in excellent time, and firmly planted his pennant.

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In Haste

“Whither away so swiftly?”
asked the Novice.

“To close the Gate of Op-
portunity,” called back Time.

[THE END]

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